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THE CEA CRITIC

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Another Pull At The Bell Rope

In two recent issues of THE CRITIC, Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Knickerbocker have discussed the segregation of freshmen; Mr. Jacobs finds it harmful; Mr. Knickerbocker at least defensible. I should like to point out some advantages in at least one kind of segregation, that of students who do not show up well on placement tests. Here at Wayne we have been increasing the proportion of these students until at present we isolate about twenty per cent of the entering freshmen. We also advance about ten per cent directly into Comp. 2.

We see no point in letting poorly prepared students flounder in the regular college composition course until they fail. Our segregation is intended to help them get such control of the language that they can do college work in English; we put them into special no-credit 1-R sections and keep them there until they satisfy us that they have a good chance of passing Comp. 1. We screen them out by means of an objective test and an hour theme, and for the first two weeks we watch the work of all students carefully to make sure that we are not making mistakes. After two weeks we shift some students out of 1-R and others into it. Later on in the term we may send still others to 1-R, as their work shows need of special help. We keep the 1-R sections small, holding them to fifteen or twenty students.

I will admit that 1-R can be pure hell for teacher and student, if the teacher chooses to make it so. But as one who happily passes up the delights of Introduction to Literature and the regular composition courses to work with my good friends, the eight-ball kids, let me suggest some reasons why I do not feel that this particular kind of segregation is wholly harmful.

In the first place, the tests and themes are not really tests of ability, but of language skills and of total cultural attainment. The students are not really dumb, though they can be made to seem so. Most of them are holding their own, at least for the moment, in other courses, and all of them have been admitted to the university on some grounds or other. Either they have looked pretty bright to somebody, or they have snake hips and can run and block like the devil. Still, they are a sad lot, hostile, perhaps, or hurt and bewildered, or resigned to being trapped again in the wheels of the system. They read stumblingly and without comprehension, and their writing is terrible. What a burden, what a burden they offer to the teacher!

Or do they? They represent failures in our system. Granted that they have failed to do what eight out of ten freshmen can do, they still have learned enough to succeed where others have failed: they have learned enough to be admitted to college, and they have learned it using language tools that obviously are not working well for them. Our object, it seems to me, is to provide them with better tools and teach them to use them. Our problem is how to do it, and if we have any pride in our teaching ability, this is the kind of problem which should attract us. Some "teachers," I guess, don't really want to teach.

If we insist on acting as if no such thing as scientific linguistics exists, as if there are no analytic studies of the language, or of the processes of language learning, or as if it is possible for youngsters to grow up wholly ignorant of their mother tongue; if we must try "grammar" drills where grammar drills have always failed; or if our sophisticated stomachs simply turn over at "bad" English spoken or written, we certainly can't do much for these students.

But if we understand that the basic structure of the written language is the same as that of the spoken, no matter how vulgar the spoken English sounds, that these youngsters all have a fluid command of some kind of spoken English for us to build on, however little they know about it, that much of their inarticulateness is due simply to lack of practice, and to nothing else, and that their eye-movements in reading are primitive, time-consuming, and laborious, since they do not know how to see in the written language the structural patterns of the spoken, we have some clues to go on and we can see some things to do.

We can give them information and teach them to become conscious observers of language. We can tell them that no one speaks written English; we all talk according to one set of habits and write according to another; we all manage differing systems of language habits which have only a loose relation to one another. We can help them learn the structural patterns of the language, and teach them to pick these up as meaningful groups of words as they read. And we can give them practice, daily practice, in class and out, in writing.

Many of these youngsters have never written a theme or any other paper, unless the experience has been bootlegged to them in some other class. (What have they done in high-school English classes? Filled in the blanks on drill sheets, plodding through a syllabus of "errors" ranked without any reference to any kind of systematic description of the language.) And we can let them be the readers, themselves, of each other's work. Here at Wayne we have frequent sessions, using an opaque projector, in which the class itself is the audience of its own work. These sessions are valuable in any composition class, but they are especially valuable for the students in 1-R. What we can do for these students, then, is take the measure of their problems and set out to help them solve them.

Each of these students is an individual human being of great potential value; each has his own peculiar troubles. But to see them as stupid or in any general sense ignorant is to misjudge them cruelly, and I would not let a teacher who measured them so within a mile of them. That they can learn we can prove by the record: in one group passed on into Comp. 1, we find four B's, ten C's, including several C+'s, one D, and only two E's—not a bad showing on anyone's curve. What they needed was kindly, affectionate, knowledgeable help, and when they found it they responded to it. Could it be that they had taken their own measure of English courses and English teachers very early, and expressed it by dragging their feet—the only way they could express it? Discards, Mr. Jacobs? Maybe they discarded us.

Whatever harm we may do these students by segregating them, I think that we do them considerable good. We draw them out of the main stream of things for a while, help them to find themselves and learn to hold their own, and then we feed them back in with some hope of success. We also improve our regular courses by keeping out those who are obviously unfitted. It seems to me that everybody benefits. It seems to me, too, that as long as we continue to believe that anybody can teach English composition or high-school English who can clutch a handbook in one hand and a workbook in the other and crawl reluctantly into the classroom, we have a responsibility to give expert help, somewhere in the system, to the students who need it. The place to give this help is the segregated section.

Donald J. Lloyd
Wayne University

ANNUAL CEA MEETING

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Presiding, William W. Watt

(Further details in later issues of THE CEA CRITIC)

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Why Reject the New Criticism?

Within the past year and a half, three articles attacking the New Criticism with increasing strength have appeared in prominent periodicals. At the MLA meeting of December, 1948, Prof. Douglas Bush set forth the contention, which seemed reasonable at the time, that historical scholars have learned much more from the New Critics than the New Critics have from them. With skill and urbane humor, Prof. Bush called attention to some embarrassing factual lapses of the New Critics.

At the MLA meeting of September, 1949, Prof. George Sherburn's presidential address aroused some doubt as to the validity of the first part of Prof. Bush's contention. This address purported to chastise the weaknesses of both fields of activity and ended with a plea for tolerance; but its emotional weight was heavily against the New Criticism. Prof. Sherburn noted the shortcomings of historical scholarship with fatherly indulgence, but he made quite clear his view that the coming generation of students is being undermined in the classroom by the disciples of the New Criticism.

More recently, in the February *CEA CRITIC*, Prof. Martin Kallich, from a position as rigid as the worst extremes of the New Criticism, rejects the new critical tenets; and, although he "concedes" the value of the New Criticism in teaching, his qualifications of this concession make clear that he considers such teaching futile. While Prof. Bush smiles at the New Criticism and Prof. Sherburn just plain doesn't like it, Prof. Kallich is aroused by the new dogma because it competes with the dogma to which he has committed himself.

At about this point, the hunt ought to be called off. It we continue at this rate, the New Critics will be swinging from the nearest cottonwood tree within another year; and this would be poor reward indeed for a group which has contributed so much to the teaching of literature. I think that a teacher can dislike the New Criticism intensely, can disagree with its principles entirely, can believe that all New Critics are afflicted with scrofula, and yet find it unwise to reject the New Criticism teaching method set forth in such books as Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry*.

This book had clearly in mind the lesson of I. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, which called attention to the fact that, after reading comparatively simple poems, select, intelligent undergraduates were unable to paraphrase them correctly or identify their subjects accurately. My own experience with recent undergraduates convinces me that this condition has not changed for the better. The simple fact is that the twentieth century has lost the ability to read skillfully. The Brooks and Warren method is a device for teaching students to read skillfully and accurately.

As I understand this method, it provides an organized apparatus consisting of critical terms with which the student is equipped. The student is then held accountable for discussing works of literature in terms of this apparatus. In order to be able to do so, he has to make a very close reading of the literature. Repeated close readings increase his skill and accuracy; and skillful, accurate reading would seem to be a minimum basis for reaching any other goal which a teacher of literature might have in mind.

Incoming students do not possess reading skill; they must be taught it; and they should be taught it as early in their college career as possible. As far as I have been able to determine, no other method teaches the student to read well in a comparatively short period. The Brooks and Warren method can substantially increase the student's reading skill in one semester. The method is susceptible to modification. It is also adaptable to different doctrinal biases; since the student's evaluation of the various aspects of literature is subject to the teacher's influence even under this method.

For teachers who emphasize the non-utilitarian values inherent in literature, this method is invaluable. I do not know of any other method which teaches the student that his own personal attitude toward any given subject is something quite apart from the attitude which a literary work presents toward it. The two attitudes may be the same; they usually are not; and, until the student is taught to distinguish between them, there is little chance of his apprehending the individual emotional quality of any work of art. This method enables the teacher to emphasize the specifically literary aspects of literature, and it is the only method which leads the student a long way toward obtaining an intuitive grasp of poetry.

Now Prof. Sherburn objects that students do not retain the material which they cover in courses which are taught according to this method. I agree that this is one of the drawbacks of the method; but, unless a student learns to read skillfully, what he retains will not be what he has read. Prof. Sherburn also objects that teaching this method involves emphasizing individual images at the expense of total effect. As I understand the emphasis in Brooks and Warren, an apprehension of total effect is the main goal of their system.

Like any other teaching method, this one is subject to misuse, but neither professional lapses nor doctrinal biases are valid reasons for rejecting a teaching method which is of the greatest use and effectiveness.

Ellsworth Mason

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Now, Gentlemen!

I couldn't help noticing the obvious contradiction in the statements of two reactors to the criticism of the "New Criticism" that has been appearing in the Critic. In the latest issue of our organ, Mr. Wimsatt, of Yale, in his apologia for Wellek, Warren et al., proclaims: "The critics of this school . . have produced . . critical anthologies or workbooks which are being used with resounding success in college classrooms all over the country." On a suceeding page, Mr. Mason, of Williams, exclaims: "I was amazed to find at the meeting at U. of Mass. last Spring just how few institutions use the Brooks and Warren system in Freshman courses."

Now, gentlemen, which one of you is right?

I was also interested in such terms as "the critics of this school" and "the Brooks and Warren system." Such expressions put some of us, not without what we think to be considerable justification, on the qui vive but pronto. They remind some of us of another age of domination by Rule and School from which it took us many painful decades to free ourselves. They suggest to us a time when it was naughty not to accept the pronunciamentos of literary pontiffs. The trouble with a system or a school of interpretation is the limits it imposes upon itself by its exclusion of galaxies. We should have learned by this time that the universe is a multiverse. A school exists to be graduated from. A system is one means to an end; it is not the end.

I have carefully examined some of the anthologies and workbooks of the school of Brooks and Warren, and I must confess that I find much to admire in their printed examples of analysis. But what this so-called new school is publicizing with considerable profit now many of us have been doing in less gainful ways for years. The School has no monopoly on ability to take things apart. It has no corner on ability to create jargon. What some of us are objecting to without rancor—and you may call us conservative if you wish to—is making of analysis and jargon end-alls and be-alls. The Founders of the School may not have had such objectives in mind. Then, they should disavow their disciples who do. Again we see that the difficulty any School must circumvent is its adolescent discipuli.

Some of us also infer that the reason for so much current emphasis upon dissection of poems is to be found in the increasing secularization of all educational processes. This preoccupation with technical analysis provides an easy out for those who cringe from boldly facing moral, ethical, and religious issues in the classroom. It is easy to ignore disturbing controversy in concentrating on form, attitude, tone, the fallacy of this, and the fallacy of that.

Some of us, however, would rather have it said about us, on our demise, as Mr. Whiting, of Harvard, said of Matthiessen in this same issue of the Critic, that "He was a popular and influential teacher whose foremost thought was always for the positive relation of Literature to the individual student" than that we had them conform to any system or school of analysis.

One phenomenon I have continually noticed in this whole tempest of the New Criticism is that proponents of the system generally respond to criticism of it in tones that betray a feeling of contempt for the innumerable unknown academics who dare to raise their voices in question of those intellectual titans whose words in print should preclude mere Promethean bravado. Those of us who honestly query the critics of the New School are labelled "ill-tempered," "die-hards," "conservatives," and, by implication at least, forms of animal life of an anachronistically low protozoic order. Always there is that air of literary hauteur, of rarefied superciliousness about the defensive measures of the followers of the Latest Academy. Mr. Wimsatt helped this feeling not a little when he wrote: "That attacks on the 'New' critics have mainly been launched by emotionalist and impressionist critics of the popular press whose concern is little with teaching or by academics who have little or no published practical criticism to their credit."

Now, Mr. Wimsatt, who is begging the question?

With such a maneuver many of us are summarily disposed of as being incapable of holding a valid opinion in matters literary simply because we haven't scaled the heights by way of the published ms. Are we to infer that since we have no established reputations as published critics, we have no right to voice our views? No right to challenge what we do see in print? Long ago many of us declared our independence from the tyranny of the word in print. Very few of us would submit to that kind of despotism again without much shedding of ink.

Let me repeat: some us have for years been using methods publicized by the so-called New critics in print; but we use these methods to subserve "the positive relation of Literature to the individual student."

F. Leighton Peters
Cedar Crest College

On Booby Traps and Gresham's Law

(1) I violently disagree with the effort of the Progressive Educationists to infiltrate Social Studies into English courses in the public schools or colleges. This has been called, at its worst, just a political maneuver. Having failed in progressive educational theories in general elsewhere and having driven the foreign languages out of the curriculum, they now wish to drive out English language, grammar, and literature (except their "social significance").

The "core" curriculum, as it is called, is, if this charge is correct, a booby trap English teachers should avoid! Neither English Departments nor English teachers should take on the additional burden of social studies nor should the aesthetic or language or literary values of the classics be subordinated to them or used merely as illustrations of them.

An English Department is certainly responsible for wrestling with elementary illiteracy within the areas of its proper fields—grammar, language, and literature. English teachers are not competent to substitute the whole world of knowledge—psychology, social relations, family relations, student-teacher relations, etc., and should not be called upon to do so. It is their business still, however strange it may seem, to teach Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens, Keats, and Hardy—and T. S. Eliot can wait. We have time, as Arnold says, only for the best in this "best of all possible worlds," if our students are to become educated men and women. To omit the standard authors is to rob the students of their literary heritage.

(2) I do not agree with those who would drive the classics like *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, *Ivanhoe*, *Treasure Island*, etc., out of the high school curriculum in exchange for the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, or at a lower level the comic books entitled *Classics Illustrated*. I do not favor the substitution of this version of *Julius Caesar* (or *Macbeth*) for a study of the play. Teachers and students are likely to infer that having avidly leafed through the illustrated version or seen the short movie film, they have "done *Julius Caesar*."

I have no objection to beginning with students on this visual or semi-illiterate level, if necessary, as a stimulus to reading the play; except for the danger implicit in Gresham's Law in finance—that bad money drives out good—so Shakespeare in *Classics Illustrated*, etc., may be so misused as to drive out study of the plays as Shakespeare wrote them.

Robert M. Smith
Lehigh University

E. Dudley H. Johnson has been appointed Philip Freneau, Preceptor in English; and Alba Warren, Jr., Elias Boudinot Preceptor in English—both at Princeton. At the same institution, Robert G. Hallwachs has been appointed to an assistant professorship in English.

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The Ivory Curtain

Author's Note: *Is it* lese majesty *to publish any sharp challenge taking issue with estheticism? The self-styled "New" Critics would seem to have it so. And in taking this party line they are lowering an Ivory Curtain around literary criticism in America.*

In June of 1949, Robert Hillyer published in the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE *an attack on the "New" Critics and on the contemporary poets they have chosen to praise and imitate. This was* apropos *the award, by an agency of the American government, of the Bollingen Prize to Ezra Pound. The controversy thus begun has been so deficient in clarity and balance, that one may well ask where the critical spirit has been hiding itself.*

A letter attacking Hillyer was prepared, signed by eighty-four critics and professors, and offered to the SATURDAY REVIEW *and then to the* NATION. *The* NATION *not only printed the letter, but added several columns of flaming denunciation levelled at Hillyer and the* SATURDAY REVIEW. *One of the crimes ascribed to the latter was unwillingness to print a letter sharply criticizing its own stand.*

Some readers of the NATION *were surprised that it should take up a literary position behind the Ivory Curtain. I decided to try an experiment to see how far liberalism would extend. I sent the following letter to both the* NATION *and the* SATURDAY REVIEW. *Both firmly refused to print it. This should not seem too surprising to anyone who has kept abreast of the literary editorial policy of either periodical. My experiment did not convince me that my letter ought to be suppressed. Indeed, I suspect that the majority of college English teachers interested in criticism would agree with me. But not all.*

Most ominous was the number of little magazine editors among the eighty-four signers of the attack on Hillyer in the NATION *and among the contributors to a pamphlet entitled* THE CASE AGAINST THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE. *This pamphlet was so lacking in balance and clarity that it did not even reprint the articles (by Hillyer) it was attacking. It failed to give an unprejudiced and judicial view of "the case." Nor was the other phrase in the title—*"Against the Saturday Review"—*justified, as a substitute for "Against Hillyer," unless it has become a crime even to offer in print an argument, perhaps a mistaken argument, about an alleged tie-up between reaction, estheticism, and public funds. In the letter which follows it is not my intent to counter with a partisan defence of Hillyer, but to urge that we need freer discussion of the genuine critical issues involved.*

This letter attempts a statement on the Hillyer-Bollingen controversy that may prove acceptable to reasonable men on both sides. Much heat in this affair has produced surprisingly little light, as four very different issues have been hopelessly confused:

I. *Who is a fascist?* (We hear the echo of guns from World War II.) The appearance of such charges on *both* sides can be illustrated by quoting one passage by the Literary Editor of the *Nation*, December 17: Hillyer, she says, tried

> "to demonstrate that the practitioners of the 'new criticism' and of modern poetry have fascist tendencies" and "that poetry which the 'common man' cannot understand is undemocratic — which I found even more shocking and dangerous. The appeal to the mob and the invitation to censorship which are implicit in this view are, indeed, sometimes referred to as fascist."

II. *Who is personally frustrated?* (We hear shrill reminders of Greenwich Village alcoholics in the 'twenties.) Or in terms of phrases published in *The Case Against the S.R.L.*: Who can most triumphantly be dubbed "diseased with envy, infected with malice,"—Pound? Jung? Hillyer? One or more Editors? Surely these personal insults have nothing to do with either the political or literary issues involved. Yet even the most dignified statement of all, the official one by the *Committee of the Fellows*, implies that no one could name a group "called by Mr. Hillyer 'the new critics,' 'neo-esthetes,' 'poetry's new priesthood,' etc." Such a group, if listed, they add, would "include perhaps all those who have found anything to praise in poets Mr. Hillyer does not approve." And in *The Case against the S.R.L.*, William Van O'Connor writes,

> "Mr. Hillyer has for many years been writing poetry as though he had been living in a little hamlet in Maine without benefit of radio, telephone, or any but a local weekly newspaper. There is little evidence in his poetry that he is alive in the 20th century. More recently he has discovered . . . that certain other poets have been living on the mainland."

(In this figure of speech, Maine and the mainland are to be thought of as mutually exclusive, like poetry written with and without benefit of radio.) We can distinguish, I hope, between personal abuse and genuine attempts to trace a literary attitude to its psychological roots. The latter can be valuable; but neither side has made any original contributions to it in this controversy. I might add that a great poet might be as frustrated as John Milton, who was certainly out of sympathy with the wits who were his contemporaries.

III. *What is the value of estheticism, in the form of the "new" criticism*—or in the form of poetry of the school of Eliot, Pound and the nineteenth-century Symbolists? (We hear the over-soft, pastel tones of the eighteen nineties, far too allusive, not coming to grips with the problem.) Now, I do not have to be an esthete to say that in the long run this third question seems to me more important for literature than the first. It has been obscured by both sides failing to keep it separate. Literature does have a social dimension. The *Saturday Review of Literature* would be on strong ground if it made a clean-cut attack on "art for art's sake." But its editors write, in the Jan. 7 *Nation*, "We are against *obscurantism masquerading* as art for art's sake." The phrase which I have italicized seems itself to obscure the issue. Do they like art for art's sake when it is undisguised?

Meanwhile their Eighty-Four opponents, who might be expected to argue that literary circles have no social responsibilities, actually move in the opposite direction. They seem to imply that freedom of the press is fascist when it goes so far as to sanction the printing of any "attack on modern poetry and criticism."

> "we are forced to believe that your critical examination of the validity of Robert Hillyer's allegations, before you published them, was somewhat less than disinterested."

And they call it a "Prepared Attack," as if this made it more vicious, though surely any critical attack is prepared before it is published. Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads" was a prepared attack, and so was this letter signed by the Eighty-Four. This leads to the fourth question.

IV. *When a literary movement is fashionable or dominant, should publication be allowed to the Voice of the Opposition?* (We hear in some of this discussion an undertone of bullying.) In other words, can critics tolerate criticism? In literature as in politics it is surely legitimate to reply to criticism, but is it legitimate to deplore *the publication* of "a prepared attack" on one's own party? We cannot develop genuine criticism in America unless there is freedom to attack as well as to praise or expound. If those who flee to the Ivory Tower cannot stand attack, they cannot stand criticism. And it is true that we seldom find trenchant criticism of dominant literary fashions in our so-called "critical" journals, though they find plenty of space for wearisome repetitions of the same procedures. Surely the *Nation* and some of the Eighty-Four who signed the letter therein should not like to find themselves assisting at the maintenance of an

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Ivory Curtain around American literary criticism.

The Ivory Curtain of estheticism could be as stifling to the critical spirit as the Iron Curtain of Communism, if we let it prevail. Eighty-Four professors and literary men, who must have read Hillyer's SRL articles, signed a letter representing those articles as an "attack on modern poetry and criticism." Yet they must have known that Hillyer was attacking only one school of modern poetry and criticism, that one which is "indebted to or at least related to" the work of Eliot and Pound. Do these Eighty-Four blandly deny existence to all other recent poetry and criticism which does not follow "the Eliot line"? (I am quoting phrases from William Van O'Connor's attack on Hillyer.) The esthetic "new" critics should be free to publish arguments against the attitude of the *Saturday Review* and against its basic assumptions. But how do they get the rest of the Eighty-Four to sign a letter that failed to define accurately the subject of Hillyer's attack? The answer to this question must recognize the effectiveness of the Ivory Curtain, with its constant reiteration, "We *are* modern poetry; we *are* new criticism; we all say so."

Last year an anthology was published devoted to "those who created, promoted, or followed in the development of the critical movement inaugurated by T. S. Eliot . . . and by I. A. Richards." So there *is* such a literary school, well recognized by its adherents, in spite of their shocked surprise that anyone would think so. The most remarkable thing about this anthology is its exclusiveness, considering that its title purports to cover three decades of criticism: *Critiques and Essays in Criticism 1920-1948*. It has this subtitle (italics mine): "Representing *the Achievement* of Modern British and American Critics." For this anthology, criticism that does not in some way follow Eliot or Richards just isn't criticism. So they do not say that Hillyer wrote a piece of criticism; they say he prepared an attack on criticism. It is this suave intolerance that so many have found unpalatable. It is the opposite of the critical spirit.

Behind the Ivory Curtain, anyone who does not follow the party line does not merely belong to another party; he is a traitor. He is, to use the *Nation's* headline, "unfair to literature," even if he is defending several schools of literature against a "new" challenge. When the *Hudson Review* was founded, some of us hoped it would supplement the periodicals of the "new" critics, already over-represented. But we turn to its editorial comment and read:

> "the *Saturday Review* and Mr. Hillyer would like to write off, as fascist or un-American, all persons whose work they do not like or cannot comprehend, and all who admire such work; the next step, of course, would be to have such persons liquidated."

This implies that those who would publish Mr. Hillyer's criticism are really fascist and un-American; and by *Hudson Review* logic, the next step, "of course," would be to have them liquidated. Did Mr. Hillyer say that his opponents should not be allowed to publish; or that they ought not receive official approval from an agency of the federal government?

Joseph E. Baker
University of Iowa

The Bollingen Award auspices have been transferred from the Library of Congress to Yale. The Library of Congress has released a five-page summary of what it terms a "tragic episode"—i.e. the Pound Selection. The 1949 Bollingen Award went to Wallace Stevens, Vice President of the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company.

Fred H. Gertz, chairman of the department of English, California State Polytechnic College (San Luis Obispo), has assumed new duties, September 1, as dean of men, Alfred (N. Y.) University, succeeding Edward L. Hawthorne.

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I've Been Reading

J. GORDON EAKER, Literary Editor
217 Audley St., So. Orange, N. J.

Give Beauty Back (Dutton, 222 pp., $2.75) shows that the chairman of a university English department can write an entertaining yet serious novel with a fine sense of architectonic, particularly commendable for balance, climax, and pattern in point of view. This book by Francis X. Connolly of Fordham University attacks the spiritual aridity of modern life in New York City and presents, by contrast, the spiritual regeneration of an artist who withdraws to the deserts of New Mexico in his quest for beauty and peace of mind. While Professor Connolly's blend of esthetic theory and Catholic theology does not make exciting reading, his point that "the tranquil transformations" are "ultimately more terrifying than the shock of noisy sound" is certainly well taken. As a Protestant reviewer I would add that this peculiar blend of esthetics and religion produced most of the wonders of medieval and renaissance art and that surely some such integration would improve modern art.

Richard B. Amacher
Rutgers University

I've been reading an uncommonly engaging book, *London*, by Robert Henrey (Dutton). Unlike George Sessions Perry's *Cities of America* and R. C. Nixon's *Lower Piedmont Country*, *London* is not a biography of colorful cities; it is a history of a corner of a corner of famous and mighty London.

Acknowledging that "London is too big for a single person to know it" and that "to each of us London means something slightly different," Robert Henrey attempts simply to present "what one mirror catches of a great big city." Made attention-compellingly attractive by Phyllis Ginger's water colors, *London* introduces us to Parliament Square, Piccadilly Circus, Green Park, Leicester Square, Berkeley Square, The Haymarket, et al., whose streets are possessed of enormous personal character and indelible warmth.

Here are the behind-the-scenes glimpses of unforgettable personalities: Nell Gwynn, charming mistress of Charles Second; John Hunter, most famous surgeon of his day; Sir Isaac Newton, Master of the Mint and President of the Royal Society, and several others. This is a delightful book.

J. Randolph Fisher
Savanah State College

The Complete Plays of Henry James, edited by Leon Edel (Lippincott, $10.)—Now we know why the attempts of a great novelist to become a successful playwright ended in failure. James underestimated the hospitality of the stage to new forms; he therefore turned his back upon his own unique method of portraying character by slow increments of self-revelation, and tried to change himself into a dexterous manipulator of plot in the manner of Scribe and Sardou. Nevertheless his plays are not without their moments of psychological and dramatic insight. Leon Edel's introduction is indispensable to students of James: it brings to light much new material and explains several obscure points in the life and personality of the great novelist.

N. Bryllion Fagin
The Johns Hopkins University

Fred Lewis Pattee, professor emeritus of American literature, the Pennsylvania State College, died, May 6, at the age of eighty-seven years. Dr. Pattee had served as professor of American literature (1894-1928) at the Pennsylvania State College; and professor of American literature (1928-1941), at Rollins College (Winter Park, Fla.).

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BUREAU OF APPOINTMENTS DIRECTOR

Albert Madeira, of the English Department at Smith College, has become director of the CEA Bureau of Appointments, and he plans to strengthen the Bureau as a service to CEA members and to the profession. All correspondence pertaining to the Bureau of Appointments should be addressed to Mr. Madeira, in care of the national Executive Secretary, 11 Old Chapel, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass.

BUREAU OF APPOINTMENTS NEW YORK OFFICE

From the twenty-sixth through the twenty-ninth of December, the CEA Bureau of Appointments will provide, at the Hotel Statler, New York City, a convenient meeting-place for Bureau registrants and those who wish to interview them. Records of registrants will be available for consultation.

The Bureau of Appointments offers its facilities to members of the College English Association and to those who wish to consider registrants for positions. To help defray the expenses of this service, the Bureau charges a fee of $3.00 per calendar year for registration.

Those interested in availing themselves of the facilities of the Bureau at the December meetings in New York should make the necessary arrangements through Mr. Albert Madeira, director of the Bureau. Correspondence should be addressed to him in care of the national Executive Secretary, 11 Old Chapel, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass.

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Letter from Liberia

Cuttington College and Divinity School is an institution of the Protestant Episcopal Church, established in 1889 to serve the educational needs of the citizens of Liberia.

Freshmen at Thirty

The teaching of English at Cuttington has its own problems. Although English is the official language of Liberia, all the tribes have their own African dialects. Often a Liberian learns English only after he has left his community and come into contact with civilization along the coast. Thus the age of our students is higher than that of college students in the States, and the majority of our freshmen have already reached thirty.

Shakespeare and Milton for Pleasure

Much of the concentration in our English classes is on the meaning of words; and one of our big jobs is getting the students to use the correct terms for his phrases, instead of merely using the first synonym he finds in the dictionary. I suppose one would say we emphasize rhetoric. On the other hand, once he has mastered English, the Liberian becomes an excellent reader, and delights in what we today would call "heavy" reading. Shakespeare and Milton seem to be read over here for pleasure. One must remember, too, that Latin is required in all secondary schools and in the first two years of college.

Books Wanted

The great problem for the Liberians is the difficulty in finding reading material. There are no publishing houses in the country, and no bookstores for secular literature. If a Liberian wishes a book, he must order one from America or Europe. Children in elementary and secondary schools are using textbooks printed twenty and thirty years ago. In spite of all this, Liberia is progressing amazingly fast, and it is satisfying work to be with them in their schools and colleges.

Sincerely,
W. R. Hughes

I wish to give a copy of Professor Bernbaum's address to each member of a small class in The Modern Novel. I found the article on the novel in the last number of The C.E.A. CRITIC immensely helpful. As I evolve this course, changing it each year, I seize eagerly such thoughtful articles as these.

Berenice Cooper
State College
Superior, Wisconsin

New England CEA Conference at Brandeis

Osborne Earle Program Chairman

The Program for the Fall Conference of the NECEA at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, to be held October 28, 1950, is as follows:

Morning: Registration will be in Science Hall and the meeting will be held in Nathan Seifer Hall, Science Hall. 9:15-10:00: Registration; 10:00-10:30: Business and Gretings, Chairman, Morse Allen, Trinity College, President, New England College English Association. Greetings: Abram Leon Sacher, President, Brandeis University.

10:30-12:00: Session I **As Others See Us: Comments on the Teaching of English by Interested Outsiders.** Chairman: Morse Allen, Trinity College. Speakers: Rosemary Park, President, Connecticut College; Crane Brinton, Professor of History, Harvard University; Bernard DeVoto, Editor, "The Easy Chair," **Harper's Magazine.**

Luncheon: 12:15-2:00: To be held in the Commons Room of the Castle. Afternoon: The meetings will be held in Science Hall. Members of the Association and guests are asked to indicate when registering the groups they are likely to attend. Rooms will be assigned in relation to the number expected.

2:00-3:00: Session II **Discussion Groups.** 1. Freshman English: Can Freshmen Enjoy English Composition? Chairman: Roberta Grahame, Wellesley College. Participants: Ralph Williams, Trinity College, Newman N. Birk, Tufts College; Genevieve Birk, Tufts College; Thomas Savage, Brandeis University. 2. The Teaching of Moby-Dick: Symbolism and the Undergraduate. Chairman: Sherman Paul, Harvard University. Participants: Patrick Quinn, Wellesley College; David Edgell, Simmons College. 3. The Teaching of the Humanities: Humanism Versus Science? Chairman: Donald Born, Boston University. Participants: Douglas Bush, Harvard University; Philippe LeCorbeiller, Lecturer on Applied Physics, Harvard University; George K. Anderson, Brown University; Ludwig Lewisohn, Brandeis University; Albert Guerard, Brandeis University.

3:30-4:30: Session III **Discussion Groups.** 4. The Teaching of Shakespeare. Chairman: Alan McGee, Mount Holyoke College; Speaker: Morse Allen, Trinity College. 5. Literature in the Catholic Curriculum. Chairman: Frederick W. Holmes, Northeastern University; Speaker: Father Carol Bernhardt, Weston College. 6. Modern Poetry. Chairman: Milton Hindus, Brandeis University; Participants: Richard Wilbur, Harvard University; Dudley Fitts, Phillips Andover Academy; Richard Eberhart; John Holmes, Tufts College.

Tea: 4:30-6:00: Members of the Association, friends, wives and husbands are invited to be the guests of Brandeis University at tea in Nathan Seifer Hall.

Dinner and Session IV: 6:00-8:30: To be held in the Commons Room of the Castle. Chairman: Ludwig Lewisohn, Brandeis University. Speakers: Maxwell H. Goldberg, University of Massachusetts, Executive Secretary of the National College English Association—"Personal Impressions of European Higher Education." Thornton Wilder, Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry, Harvard University,—"Our Students' Myths."

Morse Allen (Trinity), President; Alan McGee (Mount Holyoke), Vice-President; Norman Pearson (Yale), Vice-President; Howard Bartlett (M.I.T.), Secretary-Treasurer.

"I was very much impressed with the speech of Ernest Bernbaum which was sent out as a supplement to Vol. XII, No. 1 of **THE C.E.A. CRITIC**, and should like to make it available to all my students in English literatuure."

Irving T. Richards, President
Cambridge Junior College
Cambridge, Mass.

George N. Shuster, president Hunter College (New York City) was granted a leave of absence to go to Bavaria at the close of the academic year, to serve as State Commissioner for Bavaria.

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